

EcoLaw Institute Inc.

Research

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March 9, 1999

President Bill Clinton  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20006

5903 '99 APR 14 P

RE: Monarchs and Genetically Engineered(GE) Food Experiments

Dear President Clinton:

Are we all guinea pigs for the global chemical-food cartels?  
At least in an honest experiment there are controls and  
monitoring to determine unexpected side effects. In the  
U.S. there is no monitoring of the experiment. U.S.  
consumers do not have the choice of a label on GE foods.

"Twenty international scientists have signed an  
unprecedented memorandum supporting the contraversial  
findings of suppressed research which found that rats fed on  
genetically modified potatoes suffered a weakened immune  
sysyem and damage to vital organs." *The Guardian*, 2/12/99,  
U.K. national newspaper(<http://www.purefood.org>)

ABCNEWS.com: Tracking Butterflies Through Chemistry 12/21/98

"In an unexpected side effect of high-tech farming,  
genetically enhanced crops could threaten the breeding  
grounds of monarch butterflies.....One target for  
farmers is milkweed, which monarch butterflies  
[caterpillars] feed on exclusively. So getting rid of  
milkweed might get rid of the monarchs as well."

A breeding area conservation plan is needed with an  
immediate moratorium on herbicide resistant crops and  
spraying certain herbicides. It could also be part of a  
regional plan to regulate the agriculture practices  
contributing to the dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico.

Sincerely,

Noah S. Root

Noah S. Root  
Researcher  
EcoLaw Intitute Inc.

CC: Al Gore  
Bruce Babbitt

92N-0139

CS011  
3/23/1999/36B

99 MAR 23 PM 2:53

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Copy to President Clinton

March 8, 1999

Janet L. Andersen  
Director  
Biopesticides and Pollution  
Prevention Division(7511C)  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
410 M Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20460

RE: Monarch butterflies and genetically engineered crops

Dear Dr. Andersen:

Thanks for your letter of February 23, 1999. I don't know if your statement about milkweeds and Monarchs is that of the EPA or not. It is not supported by any evidence.

Common milkweed(*Asclepias syriaca*) began moving to cultivated fields in the late 1960's. It escaped roadside spraying coincident with the removal of competing annual weeds by herbicides that did not control *A. syriaca*. Reduced tillage and less crop rotation are factors aiding its survival. (Agronomy 517:Weed Biology and Ecology from the internet along with other references enclosed)

I do not have a copy but there are likely deceptive omissions in Monsanto's Roundup Ultra pesticide registration. Concealed are the ecological effects and the effects on nontarget species such as the Monarch butterfly migration. EPA is asked to suspend the pesticide's registration and call a moratorium on GE crops until there is a conservation plan for the Monarch butterflies and their essential milkweed.

Sincerely,

Noah S. Root

Noah S. Root  
Researcher  
EcoLaw Institute Inc.

Enclosures

CC: Carol Browner  
Bill Clinton  
Monarch Watch

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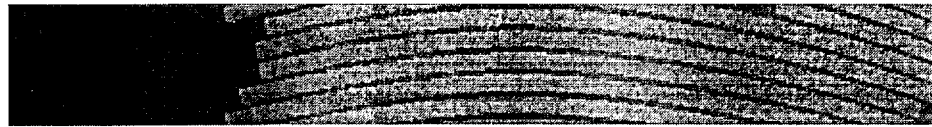
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## Tracking Butterflies

### Chemicals Reveal Birthplace



Hydrogen and carbon isotopes can tell where this monarch butterfly comes from. Milkweed draws the molecules from water and soil, which end up in the butterfly's wings when it feeds on the plants. (Gary Carter/Corbis)

By *Kenneth Chang*  
 ABCNEWS.com

**Dec. 21** — In an unexpected side effect of high-tech farming, genetically enhanced crops could threaten the breeding grounds of monarch butterflies.

Farmers have now begun planting crops genetically jiggered to be resistant to herbicides, which will allow them to spread greater amounts of weed killers without hurting corn or soybeans.

One target for farmers is milkweed, which monarch butterflies feed on exclusively. So getting rid of milkweed might get rid of the monarchs as well.

### From Farmers' Fields

Using a new technique that pinpoints a butterfly's birthplace from the chemical composition of its wings, scientists have found that half the monarchs at winter colonies in Mexico were born in the soybean and corn belt of the Midwest.

"This might be a little bit of a heads-up on what we do in the United States and Canada that might affect its long-term survival," says Leonard Wassenaar, a research scientist at Environment Canada. "That potential is there to completely eliminate milkweed from agricultural settings."

Wassenaar and colleague Keith Hobson report their findings in today's issue of the *Proceedings of the*

### SUMMARY

**Researchers can trace the migration paths of monarch butterflies based on the chemistry of their wings.**

### WEB LINK

[Monarch Watch](#)

deuterium — stays fixed and doesn't change.

Thus, the fraction of deuterium in the butterfly wings tells how far north they came from. A similar technique with the carbon-13 isotope helps narrow the butterfly's birthplace between the East and Midwest.

### Flying in From All Over

Wassenaar and Hobson show that each winter colony contains butterflies from many different places, rather than a specific section of the U.S. or Canada.

What was unexpected was the finding that half of the monarchs in Mexico came from a swath about 100 miles wide from Nebraska to Pennsylvania, the American farming heartland. That leads to the concerns about the genetically-modified crops.

"Without this study," Taylor says. "We probably wouldn't even have thought of this." Previously, Taylor believed the bulk of the monarchs came from farther north, from the pastures in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

### Poison Crops

In addition to the herbicide-resistant crops, others have been modified to emit a naturally-occurring toxin called *Bacillus thuringiensis*, or Bt for short.

"You're spitting toxin out there on the wind for all the caterpillars, including the monarchs," Taylor says.

He cautions it is too early to tell how the monarchs might be affected. Genetically modified crops are still a small fraction of the total harvest. No one knows how much milkweed grows in the fields.

If wiping out milkweed from farmland does prove to be a significant problem, Taylor doesn't expect farmers to stop planting the genetically modified plants just because pretty butterflies are suffering.

A more fruitful remedy might be to restore milkweed to roadsides, pastures and other places where the plants once grew.

For now, the annual migrations continue, and the wing analysis technique will enable scientists to get a better idea of where the monarchs have come from and where they're going. ■

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USA 22



Hospice Care



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MAR 15 1999  
DEPT. OF THE ARMY

President Bill Clinton  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20006